Canadian Wildlife Lands Management Survey 1989-90

A final report* to the Canadian Wildlife Management Community

Submitted by
Saskatchewan Parks and
Renewable Resources,
Wildlife Branch

Dave Arneson and Syd Barber

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*Final report to be presented to the fall 1990 Wildlife Minister's Council of Canada meeting; subsequent questions if any, will be investigated using the available data.

Executive Summary

The Canadian Wildlife Lands Management Survey was developed and distributed to Canadian wildlife management agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs) to explore the question of wildlife land management - a question raised at the Wildlife Ministers Council of Canada meeting in Saskatoon in the fall of 1988.

Twenty four million hectares (59 million acres) of wildlife lands are reportedly managed by the 31 (of 42) respondents who indicated they were directly involved in such activity. Preservation of vulnerable wildlife habitat was cited as the primary value of wildlife lands and although most respondents indicated that, in their area, wildlife lands secured less than 10% of the existing critical wildlife habitat, some returns reported 50-100% of critical habitat preserved for a specific species (eg waterfowl, great blue heron).

The purchase of additional wildlife lands was strongly endorsed and approximately 60% of respondents felt that management of existing wildlife lands is "generally appropriate" but not without some significant problems. Competition with other land uses was identified as the most serious problem. This problem was attributed to lack of political support, money and administrative control.

Greater NGO involvement in wildlife land management was widely endorsed, for several reasons. There were also numerous calls for the management process to be better supported by deliberate management plans and to be more holistic than it is now.

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Background

The topic of management of "wildlife lands" arose at the inaugural meeting of the Wildlife Ministers Council of Canada in Saskatoon in the fall of 1988. Wildlife Habitat Canada brought the matter up on behalf of the national Habitat Coalition of non-government wildlife organizations. A national survey, distributed among all agencies and organizations involved in wildlife land management, was suggested to address questions about possible problems and opportunities in this area. Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources, Wildlife Branch, as host of the gathering, volunteered to conduct the survey in cooperation with Wildlife Habitat Canada.

The survey (Appendix I) was designed in the summer of 1989 and tested on a subjectively selected sample of the Canadian wildlife management community. Many helpful suggestions received were incorporated into the survey and it was sent to all government agencies and non-government organizations in September, 1989. A reminder was sent late in the fall to non-respondents.

Results and Discussion

Response

The 55 surveys sent out generated 43 returns, a response rate of 78%. Government agencies and non-government organizations were almost equally represented in the returns, as were the various regions of the country (Appendix 1). Thirty-one (72%) of the respondents indicated they directly managed land for wildlife purposes; these lands total 24 million hectares (59 million acres). The Northwest Territories indicated that they and the aboriginal groups co-manage the entire territory for wildlife, but this survey was designed to investigate only those lands specifically dedicated to wildlife.

Values of Wildlife Lands

Question 8 regarding the most significant outcomes of the existence of wildlife lands in a geographic area, provided respondents with a number of choices, of which three could be ranked in order of importance. "Preservation of

vulnerable habitat" was picked by the majority as the most important contribution. This contribution received 20 first place rankings and 28% of all the choices (Table 1). The response to the overlapping second part of this question suggests that wildlife lands have a greater positive impact on populations (19% of choices) than on species (8% of choices). This corresponds to the reaction to Question 9(a) in which the majority of respondents said wildlife lands contribute only 0 - 5% of the total critical wildlife habitat existing. However, all categories up to and including 50 - 100% of total critical wildlife habitat received recognition, indicating that in some cases and for some species, wildlife lands protect the majority of critical wildlife habitat.

Public enjoyment and education was reported to be a significant value of wildlife lands, although one that ranked behind biological preservation (Table 1). Access to wildlife resources received the fourth largest number of choices - 12%. The future importance to wildlife of these lands was rated as similarly important.

Merit of Purchase

Canadian wildlife conservation agencies and organizations apparently view land **purchase** as an important option for the preservation of wildlife habitat. Only 2 of 41 respondents said otherwise in response to a question aimed at getting opinion on the importance of this mechanism. This was reinforced by the poll on a related question which asked whether purchase of additional lands or more intensive management of **existing** wildlife lands would be the best investment for additional monies in the geographic area of interest to the respondent. Seventy-two percent (72%) reported that additional purchases were the best way to allocate incremental monies.

Table 1: Response to Survey Question 8

Values of Wildlife Lands	Choices Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Undifferentiated Choices	Total Choices
Vunerable Habitat preserved	20	1	1	6	28
Major Contribution towards maintainance of:					
a) species	1	1	3	3	8
b) population	2	12	1	4	19
c) access to wildlife resources	2	3	6	1	12
Public:					
a) participation	1	2	2	2	7
b) popularity	1	0	3	2	6
c) education	0	2	7	1	10
Future Importance to Wildlife	0	6	4	2	12
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	27	27	27	21	102

Management Problems

Not withstanding the secondary importance attached to land **management** versus securing additional habitat, there is considerable sentiment in Canada that there are problems with the management of wildlife lands. Approximately 40% of the survey respondents believed wildlife lands in their "jurisdiction" were generally **not** managed in an appropriate manner (Question 4). This belief was shared similarily between government agencies (31%) and non government organizations (44%) alike (Figure 1). More than double this number (87%) felt there were **problems** associated with land management for wildlife.

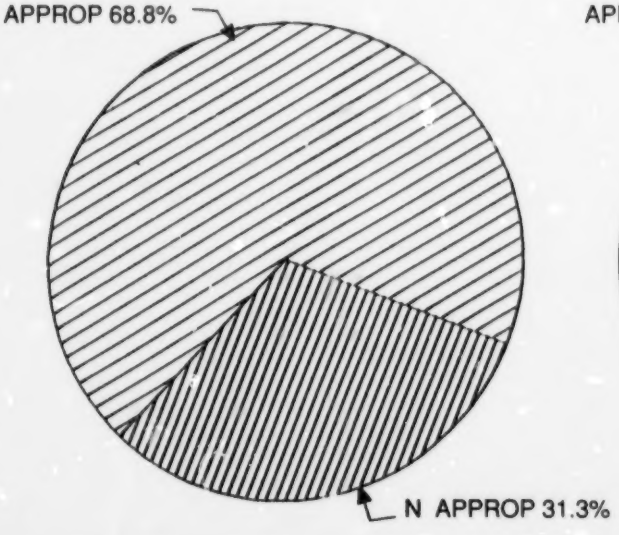
Many respondents took advantage of the chance to define their own wildlife land management problems. The outstanding problem, according to the survey (Question 6, matrix), is competition with other land uses. This issue was identified more often than any other, and was typically cited as a major problem (Fig. 2). An example of a competing use, strongly mentioned from Alberta, is cattle grazing. Considerable unfavourable attention was also received by:

1) managed for inappropriate objectives; and
2) lack of support for public use. Habitat capability not fully developed, and trespass use received a number of choices but they were typically characterized as minor problems. Lack of resources and high cost was a recurring problem and noted on responses from all across the country. Payment of taxes (to Rural Municipalities) and lack of government commitment were also cited as wildlife land management problems.

The underlying reasons for the pre-eminent problem of competition with other land uses were cited, most often, as lack of political support and lack of money (Figure 3). Lack of public support as well as lack of administrative control were also frequently chosen. The problem of "habitat capability not fully developed" was attributed to lack of money followed by lack of techniques, people and political support. The inappropriate management objectives problem was thought to be due to lack of political support and administrative control.

Figure 1. Canadian Wildlife Land Management

View of Government Agencies



View of Non Government Organizations

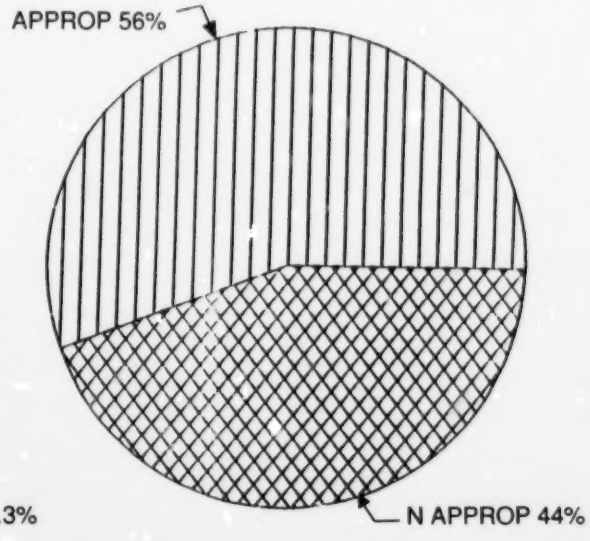


Figure 2. Canadian Wildlife Land Management:
Perceived Problems

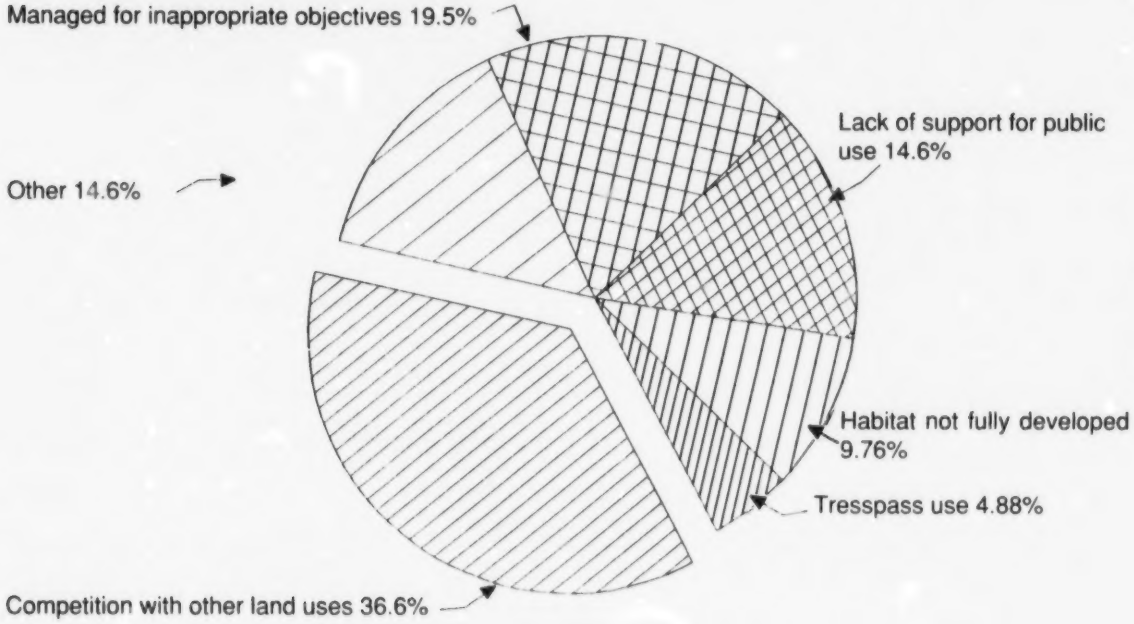
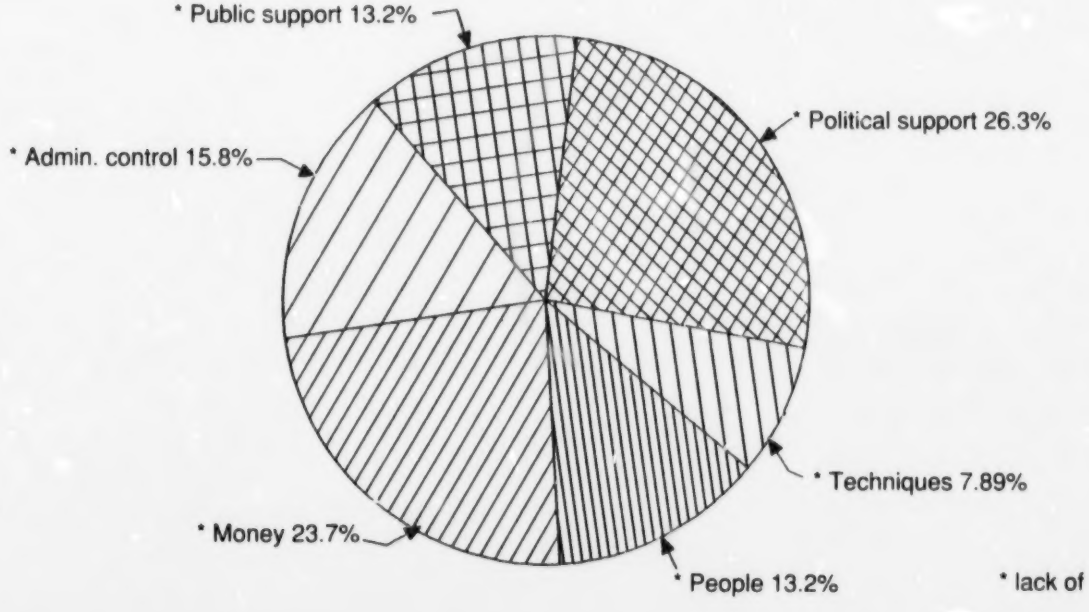

Managed for inappropriate objectives 19.5%
Lack of support for public use 14.6%
Other 14.6%
Habitat not fully developed 9.76%
Tresspass use 4.88%
Competition with other land uses 36.6%

Figure 3. Canadian Wildlife Land Management:
Competition with other land uses - underlying reasons



NGO involvement

The qualitative part of the survey produced the most dramatic and interesting response. There was a resounding **YES** to the question "Should non-government agencies be more involved (in the management of wildlife lands)?". One of the more comprehensive replies to this question was as follows: "Non-government agencies should be encouraged to participate in the management of wildlands, not only to gain a broader basis for support, but also as a source of sound local knowledge and as local stakeholders. Non-government groups could be encouraged to become involved through a more open planning process, involvement earlier in the decision-making and policy formulation regarding management practices, intervenor funding to cover outstanding expenses and an on-going communication system which invites feedback once management plans have been implemented."

Several strong themes are apparent in the rationales supplied in support of the YES vote:

1. joint ventures are a good way to go; share the responsibility between government and the NGO community;
2. NGO involvement must be meaningful; involve them early in the decision making process and heed their input; consider them a part of the management team;
3. the management process and the incoming NGO partners need the guidance of management objectives;
4. NGO's are often impoverished and need to be provided with not only the management opportunities but with some financial resources to help do the job;
5. NGO's have some peculiar capabilities with respect to wildlife land management, notably local knowledge and much more resistance to political pressure.

The replies to the "ideal long term management mechanism" question strongly overlapped with those specifically concerning NGO involvement in the process, further embracing the NGO's. Not surprisingly, there were also repeated calls for wildlife land management to be deliberate, guided by plans and supported by more adequate resources than are generally available now. Public education was also cited by several respondents as an important factor.

General Comments

Finally, some excellent commentaries were received on wildlife habitat conservation in general. The prominent suggestion was that we must become more holistic in our approach to this, both with respect to the management of wildlife lands **per se** and our society's view of the entire landscape. Narrow management for a single game species may no longer be appropriate, it was suggested. Respondents said that multiple land use should be **practised**, not just talked about, and many people stressed that private stewardship plays an essential role in habitat conservation and must be fostered.

Appendix 1
Canadian Wildlife Lands Management Survey of Government Wildlife Agencies/Non Governmental Wildlife Organizations

Preface

Purchase of key habitat is a traditional wildlife conservation practice in Canada. Formal designation of existing crown land as wildlife habitat is also occuring even though primary administration may remain with a non-wildlife agency. The growing holdings of all wildlife land pose a management challenge, however. This survey is designed to explore the soundness of existing management.

1. **Agency/organization identity.**

   a) Name 43 returns/55 surveys sent

   * Not all respondents answered every question

   b) Classification

[Mark (X) one]	Government Agency	Non-Government Agency
National	2	5
Regional (ie. Prairies)	6	1
Provincial/Territorial	9	20
	17	26 = 43

2. **Does your agency/organization directly manage wildlife lands?**

   [Mark (X) one]

   No 11 Yes 31 Area 21 million ha

3. **What is your view of the current validity of land purchase as a habitat conservation mechanism?**

   [Mark (X) one]

A valuable option	39	
Not a valuable option	2	

4. **What is your view of the management of wildlife lands in the geographic area you represent?**

   [Mark (X) one]

Generally appropriate	24	60%
Not generally appropriate	16	40%

5. **Whether management of the lands is generally appropriate or not, are there any associated problems?**

No	5	13%	Yes	34 87%

* Wildlife lands are defined as those belonging to the Crown or a non-governmental organization which are deliberately used to sustain wild birds and/or mammals. This use can be singular or part of a multiple use plan. Management is also defined as a deliberate action, although this can be passive (ie. refuse to allow cattle grazing) or active (ie. vegetation manipulation).

6. **Please use the matrix below to define the wildlife land management problems you perceive in the geographic area you represent.**

#6 Matrix: Wildlife Management Problems

Nature ID and Rank Max. of 31	MAGNITUDE Rank [Mark (x) one] Minor	Mod.	Major	Underlying Reasons (Id and Rank Max. of 3 for each identified problem) LACK OF Money	People	Techniques	Political Support	Public Support	Admin. Control	Other (Please Define)
Competition with primary land uses										
Tresspass use										
Habitat capability not fully developed										
Lack of support for public use										
Managed for inappropriate objectives										
Other (please define) _____										

7. **Which of the following options would be near the most cost-effective investment for any additional monies in the geographic area you represent?**

More intensive management of existing wildlife lands 11 28%

Purchase or designate additional lands for wildlife 28 72%

8. **What are the most significant outcomes of the existance of wildlife lands in the geographic area you represent?** (Identify and rank a maximum of 3)

Vulnerable habitat preserved _____

Major contribution towards maintenance of:

a) species _____
b) population _____
c) access to wildlife resources _____

Public:

a) participation _____
b) popularity _____
c) education _____

Future importance to wildlife _____

Other (define) _____

9. **Please estimate the impact of wildlife lands in the geographic area you represent, on the following parameters:** % of total [Mark (X) one for each parameter]

	0-5%	5-10%	10-25%	25-50%	50-100%
a) Preservation of critical wildlife habitat					
i. In settled area	19	9	1	4	6
ii. For target species (list) _____	13	8	3	10	7
b) Amount of recreation provided					
i. Hunting	10	9	6	8	5
ii. Non-consumptive wildlife use	7	8	13	3	6

10. Please offer your reaction to the following questions, and any additional comments you wish to make.
    a) What is the ideal mechanism for long-term management of these lands?
    b) Should non-government agencies be more involved? If so, how can new managing partners be recruited.

Additional comments:

Thank you!

Return to :

Saskatchewan Parks, Recreation and Culture
Wildlife Branch
Habitat Section
Room 436
3211 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 5W6